

Exercise #1- Is Tourism Right for Our Community?

Use the following exercise to help determine whether or not your community might be ready for an increase in its tourism industry. Remember that there is always the chance tourism might not be the right fit for you.

There are no right or wrong answers, just a little enlightenment at the end.

Is your community dependent upon one industry?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



Are local businesses

- ☐ Expanding?
- ☐ Stable?
- ☐ Declining?

Is employment seasonal?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Which season? _____

Benefits

If so, perhaps tourism could diversify the economic base.

Costs

An expanded tourism industry could require additional infrastructure.

Benefits

If stable or declining, then tourism may provide an important boost.

Costs

If declining, then improvements may have to come prior to marketing to tourists.

Benefits

If developed during the slack season, then tourism may help.

Costs

Some people may *like* things a little slow, and resent crowds and traffic during their “quiet time.”

Is the workforce

- ☐ Skilled
☐ Unskilled



**Is the local unemployment rate
high or low?**

- ☐ High
☐ Low

**Have local tax revenues, including transient
occupancy tax and sales tax been**

- ☐ Increasing
☐ Decreasing
☐ Stationary

Benefits

If unskilled, they may benefit from an increased need for service workers with minimum skills. If skilled, you may have to creatively explore symbiotic connections (e.g. entrepreneurial activities).

Costs

If unskilled, then training may be both desirable and required through local schools or job training agencies.

Benefits

If high, perhaps tourism could provide needed jobs.

Costs

If low, you might have to “import” workers from nearby communities.

Benefits

Tax revenues increased by more visitors could relieve the burden on residents. Increased T.O.T. funds could pay for more tourism promotion, thereby setting into motion an upward spiral.

Costs

If revenue is not immediately available, an initial expenditure for additional promotion first must be made.

Is the diversity of shops and stores

- ☐ Inadequate
- ☐ Considerable
- ☐ Somewhere in between

Benefits

If inadequate, expanded tourism activity may stimulate more diversity. If considerable, the diversity may be a drawing card for more visitors.

Costs

If inadequate, then significant local economic development activities may need to be initiated.

Are your downtown areas and main entrances

- ☐ Attractive
- ☐ In need of clean up
- ☐ In need of major restoration and repair

Benefits

If attractive, you have a greater potential for attracting and holding visitors. If in need of clean up, community organizations can be mobilized and the results will boost community morale, as well as set the stage for increased tourism activity.

Costs

If in need of major restoration and repair, then funding will be required, although this can be done incrementally. After the initial stages, increased tax revenue may be used. Be sure to evaluate signage, roadways, parking, restroom facilities, trash disposal and public safety.

Are local cultural activities

- ☐ Thriving
- ☐ Struggling

**Benefits**

If thriving, you may be able to quickly appeal to an expanded audience and thereby generate increased tourism. The community benefits through expanded cultural horizons.

Costs

If struggling, then you will need to upgrade. This will take time and may meet with resistance.

Are recreational activities

- ☐ Plentiful
- ☐ Barely adequate
- ☐ There's nothing to do!

**Benefits**

If plentiful, you're sitting on a goldmine, as long as you conduct an inventory and arrange for display and distribution of information. If barely adequate, expansion will be necessary.

Costs

If there's nothing to do, then you either have little potential to attract visitors, or you need to look at your community through the "fresh eyes" of a visitor. Sometimes, you just don't recognize what you have!

On the issue of increasing tourism activity, is your community in

- ☐ Agreement
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ At opposite poles

**Benefits**

If in agreement, then you will have the support you need to market your area.

Costs

If uncertain or at opposite poles, then you need to invest time for education and consensus building so residents and business people will be hospitable hosts to your visitors.

If your answers to the above questions were generally positive, then expanding economic development through tourism might just be the answer for your community. If your answers were overwhelmingly negative, don't give up. If the desire is there, then slowly you will be able to make the improvements necessary for a thriving tourist industry.

If after answering these questions you are starting to think about recruiting a steel factory or a new state prison, we wish you the best of luck!